

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

For detailed answers to some frequently asked questions about key components of the Framework, select from the following list.

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## Information Technology (IT) Project

An IT project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique information technology product, service, or result (e.g., an [automated system](#)). An IT project should have specific starting and ending dates, well-defined objectives and constraints, established responsibilities, and a budget and schedule. An IT project may be self-contained or may be part of a larger project. An IT project further refers to a project that uses, collects, manipulates, transfers, stores, or automates information. To determine if a project is considered an IT project, there are four main questions to answer:

1. Does the project require the collection or receipt of data, or the storage of data in a database?
2. Does the project generate data that is used by another system or entity, or that is made available to people through the Internet?
3. Does any part of the project involve automating all or part of a process, or improving all or part of a process by moving to newer technology?
4. Does the project take raw data and turn it into information for analysis or decision-making?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, then the project is considered an IT project and is subject to the CMS Integrated IT Investment & System Life Cycle Framework.

## **"Major" IT Investment/Project**

A "Major" IT investment/project at CMS meets one or more of the following criteria:

- An IT investment or project with total life cycle costs of \$10 million or greater over a five-year period (development/modernization/enhancement (DME), steady state (operational), or mixed);
- A project with an annual cost of over \$2.5 million;
- A financial management system with an annual cost greater than \$500,000;
- A system or IT investment that requires special management attention because of its importance to CMS' mission (e.g., one that will steer CMS into a future direction, will change the way CMS performs a business function, or that has significant program or policy implications);
- A project that is of high visibility to important stakeholders (e.g., Congress, [Office of Management & Budget \(OMB\)](#), Department of Health and Human Services, CMS Administrator);
- An investment that was a major investment in the FY2005 budget submission and is continuing;
- A project using e-business technologies or related to E-Gov initiatives, regardless of cost;
- A project that is directly tied to the top two layers of the Federal Enterprise Architecture (Services to Citizens and Mode of Delivery); or
- A project that is an integral part of CMS' modernization blueprint (Enterprise Architecture).

## **How do I get funding for my IT Project?**

The CMS Chief Operating Officer (COO) directed the [CMS IT Investment Review Board \(ITIRB\)](#) to implement a new approach for developing the FY 2006 operating plan and the FY 2007 budget formulation for IT investments. Each CMS business component will rank its IT investments against strategic goals and other CMS business objectives and priorities, and the ITIRB will use this information to make funding recommendations.

All CMS IT funding requests will go through this new process, which is described in the [New IT Investment Process Memorandum \(PDF - 58KB\)](#) that was disseminated by the [Chief Information Officer \(CIO\)](#) (who is also the Chair of the ITIRB) to all CMS Office/Center Directors and Regional Administrators on February 14, 2005. This memorandum, along with its many attachments, outlines the new process and the requirements for submitting budget requests for IT investments.

In most cases, an IT investment is equivalent to an [IT project](#). However, in some cases an IT investment may be comprised of multiple IT projects.

## Where can I go for help with my IT project?

The CMS Integrated IT Investment & System Life Cycle Framework provides a foundation and supporting structure designed to aid in the successful planning, engineering, implementation, maintenance, management, and governance of CMS IT investments and system life cycle projects. A wealth of detailed information and guidance about the Framework is available from within this website.

The Framework covers the entire life cycle of an IT investment. In most cases, an IT investment is equivalent to an [IT project](#). While there are various types of IT investments and IT-related projects that exist at CMS, this Framework is designed primarily to address IT investments/projects associated with [automated systems](#).

If you are beginning a new IT project, or if you have questions or need assistance in determining how the Framework may apply to your specific IT project (including how to grandfather an existing IT project into the Framework), contact your designated [Component Lead](#) who will be pleased to help you. Your designated Component Lead serves as your liaison to the Office of Information Services (OIS) and is your key resource for helping to identify and obtain resolution of IT project issues. Your Component Lead can also assist you in determining which Framework artifacts and reviews will be required or are encouraged for your specific IT project during its life cycle.

If you would like to talk with someone regarding a specific Framework topic, see [Support Staff/Experts](#) for additional contact information.

## **What are the mandatory things I must do?**

In consideration of the specific circumstances associated with a given IT investment/project or automated system and the system development methodology being employed, the following artifacts and reviews are generally required for all IT projects or automated systems, to an appropriate level of detail:

### **Artifacts**

[IT Fact Sheet](#)

[Business Case Analysis \(BCA\)](#)

[Requirements Document](#)

[Information Security \(IS\) Risk Assessment \(RA\)](#)

[System Design Document \(SDD\)](#)

[Code](#)

[Version Description Document \(VDD\)](#)

[Implementation Plan](#)

[Test Plan](#)

[Test Summary Report](#)

[Operator Manual](#)

[Budget/Funding Artifacts & Activities](#)

[Project Management Artifacts & Activities](#)

[System Security Self-Assessment](#)

[Privacy Impact Assessment \(PIA\)](#)

### **Reviews**

[Investment Selection Review \(ISR\)](#)

[Preliminary Design Review \(PDR\)](#)

[Operational Readiness Review \(ORR\)](#)

In addition, for each automated system, the following are also required:

[System Certification](#)

[System Accreditation](#)

[System Re-Certification](#)

[System Re-Accreditation](#)

If the IT project will be utilizing the services of a contractor or other Federal agency, or will require other procurement actions, then the following will also likely be required:

[Acquisition Artifacts & Activities](#)

If the IT project involves personally identifiable data, then the following additional artifacts may likely be required:

[System of Records \(SOR\)](#)

[Computer Match Agreement \(CMA\)](#)

[Data Use Agreement \(DUA\)](#)

Additional artifacts that may be required depending on the specific circumstances of the IT project, or which may be encouraged as best practices include the following:

[Concept of Operations \(ConOps\)](#)  
[Logical Data Model](#)  
[System Security Plan \(SSP\)](#)  
[Interface Control Document \(ICD\)](#)  
[Database Design Document](#)  
[Data Conversion Plan](#)  
[Release Plan](#)  
[Test Case Specification](#)  
[Training Plan](#)  
[User Manual](#)  
[Training Artifacts](#)  
[Change Requests](#)  
[Problem Reports](#)  
[System Disposition Plan](#)  
[Corrective Action Plan](#)

Additional reviews that may be required depending on the specific circumstances of the IT project, or which may be encouraged as best practices include the following:

[Requirements Review \(RR\)](#)  
[Detailed Design Review \(DDR\)](#)  
[Validation Readiness Review \(VRR\)](#)  
[Implementation Readiness Review \(IRR\)](#)  
[IV&V Assessment](#)

Your [Component Lead](#) will be pleased to assist you in determining which artifacts and reviews will be required or are encouraged for your specific IT project during its life cycle.

## **Automated System Vs. Information System**

An "Automated System" is a configuration of hardware and software infrastructure, applications, and associated documentation, either custom designed or commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software, or combination thereof, that automates the activities of collecting and/or accessing data or information and performing logical computations in support of CMS' processes.

An “information system” is a discrete set of information resources organized for the collection, processing, maintenance, transmission, and dissemination of information, in accordance with defined procedures, whether automated or manual. [OMB Circular A-130)

## What Is A Standard?

In the *Master Plan for Software Engineering Standards, Version 1.0*, published on December 1, 1993, by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Software Engineering Standards Committee (SESC) Long Range Planning Group, the SESC established that a standard can be:

1. an object or measure of comparison that defines or represents the magnitude of a unit;
2. a characterization that establishes allowable tolerances or constraints for categories of items; and
3. a degree or level of required excellence or attainment.

Standards are definitional in nature, established either to further understanding and interaction, or to acknowledge observed (or desired norms) of exhibited characteristics or behavior. For the purposes of CMS, an Information Technology (IT) Standard is an officially categorized convention, methodology, or preferred product authorized for use within CMS. For detailed information regarding the specific IT Standards established by CMS, see [CMS IT-Related Standards](#).

## **What Is A Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)?**

A Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is a decomposition of the planned work effort into specific phases, tasks, activities, milestones and deliverables necessary to accomplish project objectives. A WBS is a task-oriented or deliverable-oriented grouping of identified elements or components of a project, which organizes and defines the total scope of the project. A WBS follows an outline structure where each descending level represents an increasingly detailed definition of a project component. Project components may be products or services. There are no time, cost, or resource assignments associated with a WBS.